

Serial No. 09/927,281

2

200-1213 (FGT 1452 PA)

In The Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for trimming scrap from a blank comprising:

a steady blade;

a clamping pad securing the blank to said steady blade;

a moving blade movable past said steady blade for trimming the blank, said moving blade moving substantially perpendicular to an upper surface of said blank;

a radius formed on the leading edge of said moving blade adapted to reduce defects in the blank associated with the trimming process, said radius greater than 0.1mm; and

a support element in communication with the scrap and adapted to reduce defects in the blank associated with the trimming process, said support element moving substantially perpendicular to said upper surface.

2. (Original) An apparatus as described in claim 1 wherein said support element reduces bending in the scrap.

3. (Original) An apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein said support element maintains the scrap substantially parallel to its original orientation.

4. (Original) An apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein said support element comprises:

a plate; and

a elastic pad.

5. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein said support element comprises:

a plate; and

Serial No. 09/927,281

3

200-1213 (FGT 1452 PA)

an elastic pad.

6. (Withdrawn) An apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein said support element comprises:

a plate; and
a spring element.

7-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method of reducing the production of defects during trimming operations comprising:

holding a blank between a steady blade and a clamping pad;
moving a moving blade past said steady blade to trim scrap off of said blank, said moving blade moving perpendicular to an upper surface of said blank;
supporting said scrap to reduce defects in said blank associated with the trimming process;
keeping said scrap substantially parallel to said scrap's original orientation during the trimming process; and
reducing the strain concentration caused by said moving blade on said blank through the use of a radius formed on the leading edge of said moving blade, said radius greater than 0.1mm.

13. (Original) A method as described in claim 12 wherein said supporting said scrap comprises:

preventing bending in said scrap during the trimming process.

14-16. (Cancelled)